CHAPTER - VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
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Agriculture is the largest sector in Indian economy. It is providing not only food and raw materials but also employment to the vast population in India. Since agriculture reached a stage where it can not absorb any increase of labour force because of large scale unemployment and under-employment there is a need to develop agro-based industries to divert the surplus population from agriculture. Thus, sericulture is best suited to a country like India, where there is surplus manpower and land resources besides its remunerative nature. By creating more employment opportunities to the rural population, sericulture prevents rural migration and also promotes handlooms sector.

The main objective of the study is to evaluate the growth and development of sericulture in Anantapur district and also to analyse the causative factors for the development of sericulture in the district.

Though India has attained the unique position of being the only country in the World which produces all the commercially known varieties of silk, over 90 per cent of silk produced in India is mulberry silk only. Further, mulberry silk production is better organised and is steadily increasing both in terms of acreage and also yields. With the liberal financial allocation in the five year plans to promote this activity and the contribution of sericulture
Sericulture which was confined only to the States of Karnataka, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir and now it has spread to Andhra Pradesh and other States. Andhra Pradesh ranks second after Karnataka in production of mulberry raw silk in the country.

By the end of 1989 in Andhra Pradesh 55,998 hectares of land was under mulberry cultivation and the production of reeling cocoons was of the order of 245.78 lakh kgs. There has been steep increase in the acreage and also production of raw silk in Rayalaseema region. But the cultivation of mulberry is mainly concentrated in Anantapur and Chittoor districts of Rayalaseema which together account for 64.39 per cent of the total area under mulberry cultivation in Andhra Pradesh.

Sericulture in Anantapur district has gained momentum in recent years. With the introduction and implementation of Drought Prone Area Programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme and Liberal financial support from the nationalised banks, Anantapur district has occupied unique place in the production of mulberry silk in the State. The district has advantage in terms of having favourable climatic conditions for the mulberry crop and rearing of silk worms.
Since the inception of Drought Prone Area Programme, the area under mulberry cultivation has been increasing at a rapid rate. The area which was 1,214 hectares under sericulture in 1975-76 has increased to 31,235 hectares by the end of March, 1992. At present sericulture industry has been providing employment to the 50,648 families in the district. Out of the total 50,648 families, the share of forward caste people is 54.54 per cent, while backward classes occupy second place with 35.22 per cent and the rest are scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.

Regarding employment opportunities in sericulture it can be categorised under two heads. One is relating to the employment opportunities in the mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing which are agriculture and are undertaken in rural areas and the other is silk reeling, twisting, weaving and marketing, which can be undertaken mostly in semi-urban and urban areas.

Analysis of comparative advantage of sericulture with other traditional crops in Anantapur district shows that employment opportunities and net returns from sericulture are higher returns and employment throughout the year to the small and marginal farmers. It makes the ideal use of manpower, water and land resources as they are critical inputs in drought prone regions.
The sericulture sector is beset with problems viz., availability of disease free layings in adequate quantity, occurrence of diseases by pests, climatic hazards, paucity of funds and lack of skilled and trained workers and inadequate and insufficient marketing conditions for cocoons. It is heartening to note that sericulturists in the district could apply their minds and have achieved a significant progress in this direction.

Sericulture in the district is confronted with the problems of shortage of layings during summer season. There is an overall scarcity of seed during this season because the basic seed farms and seed areas and production of cocoons for eggs are inadequate. So even in summer, adequate quality of seed must be made available to relieve the farmers from the pain of going to the neighbouring State.

Another important problem which has been hindering the development of sericulture in the district is the scarcity of labour. Because of inadequate training facilities, the supply of skilled labour is not sufficient to satisfy the demand for skilled labour. Hence, training facilities for sericulturists should be made available at all mandal headquarters.
Disease and pests and fluctuations in climate are creating a major problem and cause to discontent among the sericulture farmers. Uzy fly, Crosserie, Flacherie and Pebron diseases, once affected, destroy the cocoon crop. Hence, sericulturists should be educated and provided with the necessary equipment to prevent the pests and diseases.

Another serious problem for the sericulture activity is the wide fluctuations in cocoon prices. This is because of the instability of cocoon crop and variations in the quality of cocoons. Inadequate marketing facilities are also a major reason for cocoon price fluctuations. The government should increase the number of regulated markets in the district. Due to inadequate market facilities, some sericulturists are marketing their cocoons in Bangalore. Unless steps are taken to have effective marketing organisation to prevent wide fluctuations in the price of cocoons, farmers will not have assured income.

Despite these problems there is a tremendous scope for the development of sericulture in Anantapur district both by way of expansion of sericulture in new areas and also modernising the activity which is already under operation in the district.
Further, a comprehensive programme has to be chalked out to provide training facilities to the sericulturists in the methods of silkworm rearing and maintaining equipment and also to educate the farmers about the necessity of maintaining suitable humidity and temperature and proper hygienic conditions. The training and extension centres have to be established at mandal level to conduct orientation programmes to the farmers. The programmes of this type are aimed to reduce the incidence of disease to silkworms and to get higher yields of cocoon crops.

Efforts have to be made to increase the production of seed cocoons, establishment of adequate number of grainages sufficient financial assistance to the farmers to increase the irrigation facilities, construction of rearing sheds etc. As a predominant agricultural activity to generate more employment in rural sector in Anantapur district, stability is the vital need of sericulture. Government have to take steps to streamline cocoon markets so as to regulate the prices of cocoons in such way as to enable the farmers to realise the fortunes of this labour-intensive activity in Anantapur district.

To conclude, sericulture development plays an important role in up-grading social and economic conditions of the farmers in general and the marginal and small farmers,
who are drawn mostly from weaker sections of the society, in particular. Keeping this view, the author recommends appropriate incentives and subsidies to the sericulturists in the district. The just and the efficient marketing condition go a long way in bettering the conditions of sericulturists in the district.